



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY THE ACTING CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF
DEVOLUTION AND CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE, HON. EUGENE L. WAMALWA,EGH, DURING THE
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 9TH EDITION OF THE AFRICITIES
SUMMIT IN KSIUMU ON 17TH MAY, 2022**

His Excellency the President, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta

His Excellences Presidents and Heads of Government present

**Our Host the Governor, County Government of Kisumu, Hon.
Anyang' Nyong'o**

All Governors Present

My Colleagues, the Ministers/ Cabinet Secretaries Present

All Permanent/Principal Secretaries Present

Members of Diplomatic Corps and Heads of Missions

Representatives of Development Partners Present

All Protocols Observed

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to be here as a co-host of this 9th Edition of the Africities Summit. Let me take this opportunity to heartily welcome all of you to our beautiful Lake-side City of Kisumu, Kenya.

We started this journey with my brother, the Governor of the County Government of Kisumu Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, almost four years ago in Marrakech, Morocco, when Kisumu and by extension, Kenya bid and won the bid to host the 9th Africities Summit.

Indeed, it has been a roller coaster journey, especially due the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that put to test all our best laid plans. We have had to postpone this Summit twice due to travel restrictions arising from COVID-19 but finally, here we are! Thank you for your patience and for rearranging all your busy schedules to join us here in Kisumu. We are a Country that loves visitors and we feel privileged to host you all.

The Summit, whose theme is "***The role of Intermediary Cities of Africa in the Implementation of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations and the African Union Agenda 2063***" has been planned over a 5-day period. We have a wide array of topics for discussions as we grapple with ways to harness our potential as a Continent for the good of us all.

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today, we come together as the Leadership of Cities, Sub-national Governments, Local Authorities, Districts, Municipalities and Towns of Africa for the advancement of decentralization and local governance in an attempt to improve the living standards of our people. I welcome you all,

once again, to Kisumu, which has been privileged to be the first Intermediary City to host this Summit

This Summit provides a platform for Cities, Urban Areas Associations and their Managers to share experiences, compare successes stories and challenges in meeting the needs of the growing numbers of urban populations as part of the efforts to improve the living conditions of urban dwellers.

The discussions during this Summit, will form the nexus for Africa to chart her own approach and trajectory to sustainable human development based on our realities while at the same time taking stock of the knowledge and experiences accrued from across the World.

As the Minister in charge of Devolution, I have interacted with delegations from a number of African Countries who have come to Kenya to learn more about our unique system of decentralization. During these five-days, those willing to get a glimpse of what devolution has done for our country are free to visit Kisumu and nearby counties. Despite the challenges experienced in its implementation, we have made great progress.

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the National Government, we have offered infrastructural support and technical assistance to the County Government of Kisumu to enable Kisumu City host this event. We believe that successful hosting of this event will go a long way towards finding solutions to the growing challenges of urbanization and will put in place the building blocks for improved livelihoods for our people.

On this first day of the Summit, we have planned three major sessions apart from the official opening ceremony, that we believe, will guide our discussions throughout the five- day session. These are; - A dialogue by Heads of State on Financing Infrastructure and Urbanization and two parallel High-Level Meetings on Climate Task-Force and the Contribution of the Diaspora to Africa's Development.

It is important for us all to start interrogating issues and come up with solutions on how we are going to finance our infrastructural developments in our Cities, Municipalities, Towns and Market Centres as a critical factor in ensuring that our urbanization meets the basic tenets of development.

Throughout the five- day period, we have lined critical sessions that are meant to drive debate and find solutions towards our common future as we grapple with which way to go in our development trajectory in our cities and urban centres. Some of these forums will be on: Trade and Investments; Digital Connectivity; Culture; Climate; Women; Youth; and Urban Planning among others.

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our discussions and interactions during this Summit should endeavor to explore innovative possibilities of reducing vulnerabilities and increasing resilience of our increasing urban populations. It is imperative that we work towards economically empowering our communities through transformative and sustainable socio-economic programmes. We should therefore consider all the opportunities available to improve our

environment and natural resource management; enhance market access: trade and financial services.

At the end of the summit, our ability to concretize entry points to our next steps should provide us with a framework for further discussions going forward even as we go back to our countries. Our efforts towards building the nation and providing peaceful environment for co-existence will be crucial in leading our communities for economic take-off.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As we continue our deliberations, I urge you to give outmost consideration on how we address the climate change crisis. Global warming is a now a reality and a major threat to our ecosystem and future existence of our nations.

At the 7th Annual Devolution Conference last year, the Council of Governors had a forum to deliberate on the effect and impact of climate change including the investments needed. We resolved that both levels of government are required to design and implement practical policies, strategies, enact the necessary laws and regulations and draw explicit action plans to address climate change.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would want to extend my most sincere gratitude to the County Government of Kisumu, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A) Staff from the Ministry of Devolution, State Department for Housing and Urban Development, State Department for Transport and

Infrastructure, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of ICT and the Council of Governors and the, for putting together this Summit.

I want to appreciate the immense support we have received from the African Union, Royal Kingdom of Morocco, the African Development Bank Group, UN Habitat, the European Commission, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UN-CDF, Cities Alliance, UNOPS, UCLG and the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI).

Other partners who have made this Summit possible in one way or the other include Google; UNDP; World Food Programme and Eco Bank.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As I conclude, let me take this opportunity to wish you all successful deliberations and urge you to also find time out of your busy schedules to sample our Kenyan hospitality and tourism sites. A boat ride in this majestic lake, taking in the beautiful scenery and calmed by the lake breeze, would be unforgettable. Try It!

Thank you

HON. EUGENE L. WAMALWA, EGH

Ag. CABINET SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION

17TH MAY, 2022